

BY-LAWS
THE BEDFORD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
BEDFORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE

Preamble

We, the members of the Bedford Presbyterian Church, do herein make a covenant that we shall maintain this church through our attendance at services, our support of its work, our gifts, our efforts, and our prayers. We shall seek, through its fellowship, to promote the Kingdom of God as revealed by Our Savior, Jesus Christ.

ARTICLE I
Name and Affiliation

The Bedford Presbyterian Church of Bedford, New Hampshire (hereinafter the “church”), an Ecclesiastical body, is constituted and organized as a particular church of the Presbyterian Church (U. S. A.). The By-Laws of this Congregation are subject to the Constitution and laws of the State of New Hampshire and also to the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U. S. A.).

ARTICLE II
The Session

1. The spiritual and temporal affairs, government and discipline of this church shall be controlled and directed by a Session consisting of the pastors and duly elected, ordained and installed Elders. The number of Elders shall be set by Session, but shall be no less than nine. The members of the Session shall be identical with and serve as the Trustees when required by law.
2. The Elders shall be divided into two classes that are as nearly equal in size as possible. The election and terms of office for the Elders are those set forth in the Book of Order of the Presbyterian Church (U. S. A.) (Book of Order).
3. An additional Elder may be nominated and elected from the youth of the Church. This Youth Elder is elected for a term of one year and the class shall be arranged so that the term of the class shall expire in July. No Youth Elder may serve on Session for consecutive terms aggregating more than two years.
4. The duties and responsibilities of the Session are set forth in the Book of Order.
5. Additional rules, procedures and policies may be established by Session. These decisions will be recorded in a separate Administrative Manual, which may be changed by majority vote of Session. This Administrative Manual will be made available to all church officers and staff and will be available for viewing by any member.
6. A quorum of Session shall be the Moderator plus one half of the Elders, except for the receipt of new members, where a quorum shall consist of the Moderator and two Elders.

ARTICLE III
Congregational Meeting

1. There shall be an Annual Meeting of the Congregation during the month of February each year.
2. Notice of meetings of the congregation shall be given on two successive Sundays. The meeting may occur on the same Sunday following the second notice. Any meeting not on a Sunday must be given at least 7 days' notice.

3. Special Meetings

- a. A Special Congregational Meeting must be called by Session in October or November of each year to elect incoming Elders and Deacons and fill any vacancies.
 - b. Special Meetings of the Congregation may be called by the Session provided congregational notice is given in accordance with item 2 above.
 - c. At such Special Meetings, no business shall be transacted except such as is named in the call.
4. The congregation may meet by electronic means in an emergency and if all members have reasonable notice of the electronic meeting and the ability to discuss and vote on business items. The meetings shall provide at a minimum the opportunity for simultaneous aural communications. An emergency shall be defined as local, state, or national states of emergency, or other extreme circumstances in the life of the world or church, as determined by the Moderator, in consultation with the Clerk of Session. The quorum set for an electronic meeting is 10% of the active membership of the congregation.

ARTICLE IV

Quorum

A quorum of the Congregation for the transaction of business at the Annual Meeting or any Special Meeting shall consist of at least 10 percent of those members on the Active Role of the church.

ARTICLE V

Right of Voting

1. All members on the Active Role of this Church shall be entitled to vote at all Annual and Special Meetings of the Congregation, provided that they are present at the meeting.
2. The Active Roll of members in the hands of the Clerk of Session shall be the authoritative list of voters.

ARTICLE VI

Organization of the Church Work

The Session shall constitute Committees and Task Forces with such duties and members, as it considers necessary for the work of the Church.

ARTICLE VII

Church Treasurer

The Session shall elect annually a Treasurer or Treasurers who need not be members of the Session. The counting and recording of all offerings by a least two duly appointed persons, or a fidelity-bonded person, is required.

ARTICLE VIII

The Nominating Committee

1. The composition and terms of office shall be in accordance with the Book of Order.
2. Each year, five members of the Nominating Committee shall be elected from membership of the Congregation, excluding members of Session and the Board of Deacons, for a one year term.

3. At its first regular meeting each year, The Session shall elect two members and the Board of Deacons shall elect one member, who, with the members of the Congregation elected at the Annual Meeting, will constitute the Nominating Committee.
4. One of the members of the Committee selected by Session, who is actively serving on Session, shall be named by the Session to be Chairperson of the Committee.
5. The Committee, acting with a pastor as a member acting ex officio and without vote, shall make nominations for vacancies and report these nominations to the Congregation on or before the Sunday preceding the day of the Congregational Meeting at which such vacancies are to be filled. Members of the Congregation may present written suggestions or nominations for all Church offices to this Committee. The presentation of the Nominating Committee's report shall not preclude nominations being made from the floor.

ARTICLE IX Membership

1. Active members of the church are determined by Session as guided by the Book of Order.
2. When Session determines that an active member is no longer fulfilling the responsibilities of active membership, that member may be transferred to the inactive member roll. Inactive members may enjoy all the privileges of active membership, including pastoral care, except for the right to vote and hold office. Prior to moving a member to the inactive roll, an effort should be made to contact the member pastorally to determine the reason for the inactivity and whether it can be remedied.
3. An inactive member may be moved back to the active roll by a simple majority vote of Session whenever Session believes that person is again fulfilling the responsibilities of active membership.
4. A person who has been on the inactive roll for two years may be dropped from the roll without further action.

ARTICLE X Deacons

1. The Congregation having desired to constitute a Board of Deacons, that board shall consist of a Pastor and its deacons in active service.
2. Of this board one-third shall be necessary to constitute a quorum.
3. The Board of Deacons shall minister to those in need, to the sick, to the friendless, and to those who may be in distress, within and beyond the community of faith, in accordance with the Scriptural duties of the office.
4. The Board of Deacons will be constituted in accordance with the Book of Order.
3. The Board of Deacons shall minister to those in need, to the sick, to the friendless, and to those who may be in distress, within and beyond the community of faith, in accordance with the Scriptural duties of the office.
5. The Board of Deacons shall elect a moderator and a Treasurer from its membership. The board may also elect other officers as needed.
6. The Board shall hold stated meetings. Special Meetings shall be held whenever requested by two of its members, or by the Session or one of the pastors. The Board shall keep a record of its proceedings, and of all funds at its disposal and their distribution, and shall submit its record to the Session for approval at least once a year, and at other times upon request of the Session.

7. The Board shall consist of a number of members as set by Session with a minimum of nine, with two classes that are as nearly equal in size as possible.

8. In addition another Deacon may be nominated and elected from the youth of the Church. This Youth Deacon is elected for a term of one year and the class shall be arranged so that the term of the class shall expire in July. No Youth Deacon may serve as Deacon for consecutive terms aggregating more than two years.

ARTICLE XI Fiscal Year

The Fiscal Year shall be the Calendar Year.

ARTICLE XII Parliamentary Authority

The rules contained in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised shall govern the meetings of the Congregation in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these bylaws and any special rules of order the Congregation may adopt.

The rules contained in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised shall govern the meetings of Session as described in the Book or Order.

ARTICLE XIII Amendments

Amendments to the By-laws may be made at any Annual or Special Meeting of the Congregation by a two-thirds vote of those present, provided that the proposed amendment(s) shall be stated with the notice of such meetings.

ARTICLE IX Indemnification and Liability

The Officers (Session, Pastors, and Board of Deacons) shall not be personally liable for the debts, liabilities or other obligations of the church. The Officers shall be indemnified by the church to the fullest extent permissible under the laws of the state of New Hampshire.

If any action, suit or proceedings is brought against any Officer as a result of any action taken by those persons on behalf of the church, the church shall defend and hold harmless such persons against such action, suit or proceedings. However, if such action, suit or proceedings is found to have resulted from gross negligence or criminal activity, the church shall not be responsible to hold such person harmless from any action, suit or proceedings resulting from such action. The foregoing indemnification shall inure to the benefit of the heir, executors and administrators of any such person.

Adopted 2/1/76; Amended 1/26/82, 1/21/83, 1/20/84, 1/29/85, 9/22/91, (Nov. 91?), 5/3/93, 10/24/99, 10/25/99, 2/5/2012, 9/29/2013, 05/03/2020